

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended): A method of operating a storage system,  
wherein when a storage system detects that ~~a remaining amount of its capacity to~~  
~~store data~~ an amount free space of the storage system has become less than a predetermined  
value, a remote storage area is provided by performing a mount operation on one or more disk  
units at a remote storage system in communication with said storage system so that said remote  
storage area serves as said storage area,

wherein a size and a speed of at least one of reading and writing of said remote  
storage area to be utilized are notified from said storage system to said remote storage system,  
and

wherein said remote storage system provides said remote storage area having said  
size and said speed as the storage area for said storage system.

11. (Currently amended): A method of operating a storage system,  
wherein when a storage system detects that ~~a remaining an~~ amount of its capacity  
~~to store data~~ free space has become less than a predetermined value, a remote storage area is  
provided by performing a mount operation on one or more disk units at a remote storage system  
in communication with said storage system so that said remote storage area serves as said storage  
area,

wherein a utilization state of said remote storage area for said storage system is  
monitored in said remote storage system, and

wherein whether or not one or more spare disk units in said storage system is to  
be used is decided according to said utilization state.

1                   12.     (Currently amended): A method of operating a storage system,  
2                   wherein when a storage system detects that a ~~remaining~~an amount of its capacity  
3 ~~to store data~~free space has become less than a predetermined value, a remote storage area is  
4 provided by performing a mount operation on one or more disk units at a remote storage system  
5 in communication with said storage system so that said remote storage area serves as said storage  
6 area,

7                   wherein data stored and managed in said remote storage area is copied to the  
8 storage area of said storage system when the storage area of said storage system is enlarged.

13-20. (Canceled)

1                   21.     (Currently amended): A method of operating a storage system,  
2                   wherein when a storage system detects that a ~~remaining~~an amount of capacity to  
3 ~~store data~~free space on at least one first disk unit installed in said storage system has become less  
4 than a predetermined value, a remote storage area that is provided by at least one second disk  
5 unit installed in a remote storage system in communication with said storage system is made  
6 available as said storage area by performing a mounting operation of said at least one second  
7 disk unit,

8                   wherein said storage system stores a correspondence between:

9                   a port ID for specifying each disk unit installed on said storage system,

10                  and

11                  an identifier of said first disk unit, and

12                  wherein, when said storage system uses said remote storage area as its storage  
13 area by performing a mounting operation, said storage system stores a correspondence between:

14                  said port ID, and

15                  an identifier of said second disk unit that is provided by said remote storage  
16 system area.